

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 879
By Winningham

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Frank Benjamin Halsell,
former Clay County judge and trustee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Frank Benjamin Halsell of Clay County; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Halsell was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously during his long and meritorious tenure to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; his passing is a tragic loss felt across the county; and

WHEREAS, a true gentleman and a man of conviction, Frank Halsell was a renowned figure throughout Clay County, where he served in three different government offices during three decades, covering a span of almost forty years. He set a standard for the other elected officials in Clay County, according to current County Mayor Luke Collins, who said, "His service is measured in decades rather than years, and he accomplished a lot of good for the people of Clay County and the area."; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Halsell was born in the Clementsville community of Clay County in 1920, son of the late Benjamin Halsell and Effie Woods Halsell; he married the former Avos Boone in 1942, and the couple set up a lifelong residence in Moss, Tennessee, shortly afterward; and

WHEREAS, a true patriot, he was a decorated veteran of World War II, and was wounded in the infamous Battle of the Bulge, which lasted from December 16, 1944, to January 28, 1945. It was the largest land battle of World War II in which the United States participated, and Frank Halsell received the United States Army Purple Heart as a result of his injuries in that battle; and

WHEREAS, after the war, he wasted little time beginning his political career, first being elected to a district road supervisor seat serving the Moss area in 1948, a post which became for him a springboard to a countywide office; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Halsell won his first race for trustee in 1950 and was re-elected three times, serving until 1966; he then set his sights on a the county judge office, an office which later became known as county executive and is now the county mayor office; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Frank Halsell won his first race for judge and won re-election to that office three times, serving until he lost the post to Cecil Langford; he then returned to defeat Langford in 1986, and served part of a fifth term as the county Chief Executive before taking a much-deserved retirement. Mr. Halsell served with acumen and alacrity, earning the respect of his colleagues and constituents alike for the exemplary quality of his work and his stalwart dedication to duty; and

WHEREAS, during his time as a countywide official, Judge Halsell formed what was to be a long, close friendship with the late congressman Joe L. Evins, who served in Congress for thirty years, and whose committees controlled many of the funds distributed by the United States government; their friendship was an asset to Clay County, as the congressman and the judge worked together to secure federal funding for projects throughout the district; and

WHEREAS, Judge Halsell helped recruit industry to the area, playing a part in the location of Crotty, Hevi-Duty, and Hermitage Springs OshKosh in Clay County during his terms as county judge; he was also a committee member for the Small Business Administration for fifteen years, and helped secure loans for businesses throughout the area; and

WHEREAS, several buildings that have served the county and area for decades were built during his terms in office, including the Clay County Library, the community center and senior citizen center, the Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery, the Tri-County Vocational School, and the Clay County Health Department, which bears his name; and

WHEREAS, a man of integrity and honor, Frank Halsell used his terms in office to build bridges of trust and cooperation as a public servant in Clay County; he was a charter member of the Celina Lions Club, and was a Mason and a Shriner; he was also a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion, served as a member of the Bank of Celina

advisory council for many years, and was a member of the board of directors for the Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative for thirty-five years; and

WHEREAS, Frank Halsell was an active and devout member of the Church of Christ, which he served faithfully throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Halsell was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, by his passing, he was reunited with his five brothers, James, Fletcher "Pat," Nemo, Buford, and Elwyn "Dood" Halsell; and two sisters, Nadine Cropper and Beulla Jobe; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his devoted wife, Avos Boone Halsell; three daughters, Gail Thompson and her husband Joe, Frankie Scott and her husband Fred, and Suzanne Halsell; one brother, Bob Halsell; three sisters, Pauline Proffitt, Mary Hullinger, and Rachel Norris; four grandchildren, Joe Frank Thompson, Jeff Scott, Lori Dorminey, and Blake Thompson; eight great-grandchildren, Teia, Tara, and Tyler Thompson, Deanny and Gracie Scott, Stephen Smith, and Rhett and Kobe Boles; and two great-great-grandchildren, Katlyn Grace and Ty Michael Smith; and

WHEREAS, Frank Halsell leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Frank Benjamin Halsell, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction. His recent passing marks the end of an era and brings a close to a remarkable political career.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family, colleagues, and many friends of Frank Benjamin Halsell.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.